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Yoga for inner peace

The recent programme, "Inner Engineering for Effortless Living" conducted by Sri Jaggi Vasudev took participants on a journey of self discovery and awareness. A report.



A WEEKEND at Mahabalipuram is indeed the nearest getaway for the Chennai-ite to escape the humdrum of workaday life. It turned out to be not just a rejuvenating but also a transforming experience for the motley group of professionals who attended the "Inner Engineering for Effortless Living" programme conducted by Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev at a beach resort recently.

The urban lifestyle, with its attendant stress, burnout and health disorders, has revived interest in the young and the old alike in age-old spiritual practices such as Yoga, Pranic healing and Reiki, to restore the sense of well-being and optimum functioning of the human faculties. The locale was just right for the participant to open up to a different level of awareness altogether, which Yoga aims to bring about.

The spiritual master set up the Isha Foundation as an international public service organisation dedicated to Self-realisation, with the headquarters in Coimbatore. The Isha Yoga Centre is located at the sylvan foothills of the Velliangiri Mountains, which is part of the Nilgiri biosphere. Besides, there is a network of centres located all over South

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India and the Isha Yoga programmes are conducted in countries such as the U.S., Lebanon, Canada and Switzerland.

According to Sri Jaggi Vasudev, "Every human activity is in pursuit of happiness. What we have achieved in the last two centuries is amazing but we are not happier than those who lived 200 years ago. In spite of all the advances in science and technology, which have made life comfortable, we are not joyful. This shows that we have not got the ABC of life properly. No matter who you are, however powerful you may be, outer situations of life will not always be under your control. Living in fear that you are a slave to external situations becomes torturous because anticipating what will happen threatens your peace of mind. Yoga is the process of restoring peace and happiness, which are basic to human nature. Everyone has the intelligence to choose to be joyful. But they are not naturally happy because the life energy is happening unconsciously and Yoga is the science of making the life energy function consciously— to become the master of your destiny."

The Isha Yoga Centre is a spiritual abode offering all aspects of Sahaja Sthithi Yoga under one roof. It houses residential facility, the Dhyanalina, which is a multi-religious temple, and a meditation hall. Belonging to no particular tradition Sri Jaggi Vasudev has incorporated what is most valid for the modern seeker from the ancient spiritual sciences. He offers Yoga to participate in the mystery of existence. Yoga is taught in depth and communicated at an experiential level based on the principle that the body is the temple of the spirit and that good health is fundamental to personal and spiritual development.

There are structured Yoga programmes to suit the level of the participant and one can progress from one to another. This two-day weekend retreat was a prelude to the eight-day Wholeness Program, which is meant for self-exploration and transformation under the personal guidance of the master. He makes it clear that he does not teach any philosophy but helps the participant along in the process of self-discovery. The approach is holistic aimed to fine-tune the body, mind and the intellect to heighten self-awareness. This Sri Jaggi brings about by engaging the group in Yogic exercises and dialogues. But it is not all work and no play. The sessions were interspersed with Dodge ball and Frisbee sessions on the beach aimed to relax and balance the faculties for effecting transformation at all levels.

We wonder what makes Tina Jabr and Nathalie Zabbal, professionals from Lebanon, come all the way to India to help in these programmes as it comes as a surprise that they are organised entirely by volunteers. Tina, who is into hospital management, said Isha Yoga, was a transforming experience in her life. "I became much more efficient and productive at work as I became a happy person. What appealed to me was the logical, scientific approach." Nathalie, who is a computer engineer, observed she had everything going in life, successful career and a wonderful family, but no satisfaction till she attended Sadhguru's programme. Afterwards, she realised what she wanted had to be found within. Usha Pattabhiraman, facilities-in-charge, Infosys Technologies Limited said she went to the programme with a sceptical mind last year when the Isha Yoga Centre approached the organisation where she was employed but it turned out to be a wonderful, inexplicable experience. After that she has been volunteering in their initiation programmes, as she wants to serve others and help them discover joy in their lives.

Dr.S.S.Badrinath, President and Chairman, Medical Research Foundation, and President, Vision Research Foundation, Sankara Nethralaya, who participated in the programme along with his wife Dr.

Vasanthi felt it was a learning experience, "He is a good communicator. We get confused as we get to hear so many teachings about Sanatana Dharma. What he says is very appealing, clear and logical without ambiguity." Dr. Udhaya Balasubramanian, Senior Consultant and chief of Department of Preventive Medicine, Apollo Hospital, Chennai, notes from a health professional's perspective after attending this programme, "It is a wonderful combination of physical activity and mental relaxation which are the keywords in present-day context of lifestyle modification advocated in preventive health care." (For details contact in Chennai ishachennai@vsnl.net Tel: 24333185 website: ishafoundation.org)

SUDHAKSHINA RANGASWAMI

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